

Local Plan 2045

There are far too many houses proposed in the local plan, based on bad data and a flawed approach from Central Government, these numbers and the random locations chosen should be reviewed in the light of the recent comments made by Michael Gove re councils setting their own housing numbers to suit demand.

No proper thought seems to have been given to building communities. The sites are those put forward by developers without any overarching strategy and no thought to the basic tenets of good town planning. This will be a string of fringe of city faceless housing estates, risking swamping the existing communities they augment, or being completely cut off from their neighbours.

The whole idea of creating extra ring roads or bypasses to nowhere makes no sense and attempting to fund it by building thousands more houses than required is equally flawed. Building more houses will just add to the problem as they will come with thousands of more cars generating more traffic movements and loads more emissions, so you are defeating the original object of your exercise!

There is not cost, or indeed an exact route for the Eastern bypass. The Western and Northern section seems to be driving traffic from the open Rheims Way, where there are no houses, through the village of Rough Common. This traffic will then arrive, passing three schools, two nurseries and a University, in St Dunstan's, an area already suffering high pollution and restricted by a level crossing. This incomplete ring road will do nothing to reduce pollution, and instead risk destroying a community to the North of the City.

Furthermore, the City will be split into 5 zones with people risking fines if they drive between them. Getting to shops, supermarkets cinemas, cafes let alone the hospital or the doctor, will mean difficult and much longer journeys for many existing residents, let alone new ones. It will actually add to the traffic, not reduce it.

I wish to draw your attention to the following points which will affect me and my fellow residents of Littlebourne Road.

We cannot support the scale of the proposed development within the radius of one mile of our neighbourhood. C12 details 1400, C13 another 645, C14 a further 67 and C15 another 74. This will move us from a semi-rural to an urban part of Canterbury. Where is the evidence that such numbers are actually required in this area? How will the necessary resources for water supply and sewage disposal be managed. Littlebourne Road is an increasingly busy thoroughfare with the current expansion of housing at Howe Barracks and in Littlebourne itself before the proposed 200 at the St Martin's hospital site are constructed. I am concerned that the concentration of houses all in this area is solely to produce the developer funds to pay for the EMC. It is also questionable how many people would wish to live in one of the properties within C12 with the main EMC running through it. The majority of these are proposed to be built on Grade 1 farmland – where are we going to grow the food necessary to feed our growing population.

The site at C15 is right next to the SSSI (Old Park and Chequers Wood) and we are concerned that the disturbance from human habitation and long term disturbance of habitat and urbanisation will be destructive, as will the construction activity. The RSPB calls for a buffer zone for SSSIs of 400m. C15 does not fit with Local Plan strategic objective 'Protect and enhance our rich environment and

valued landscapes, supporting wildlife and biodiversity and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities’

The Littlebourne Cluster is an important wildlife corridor where rare species such as turtle doves and nightingales nest. The proposed EMC (C16) will cut across this area, introducing more light, noise and traffic pollution, and interrupting the connectivity for wildlife between the SSSI at Old Park and Chequers Wood, via Hospital wood, Moat Rough and Trenley Park Wood to the internationally recognised RAMSAR site at Stodmarsh. All of these are Ancient Woodland and safe sanctuary for numerous birds, mammals’ reptiles and Flora. The Local Plan mentions the importance of increased habitat connectivity to fragmented woodlands but the EMC is in direct opposition to this. Lighting and noise from the new EMC will affect flight paths of birds into the Nature Reserve at Stodmarsh. Local residents have had Planning Applications refused because of their proximity to the Ancient Woodland so why is it proposed to destroy this with a major road. Therefore, C16 does not fit with Local Plan strategic objective ‘Protect and enhance our rich environment and valued landscapes, supporting wildlife and biodiversity and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities’

Not only is the Old Park and Chequers Wood designated as SSSI but there are archaeological sites within the area of significant importance which are currently being excavated. Moat Rough and Hospital Wood have had very recent archaeological studies with their findings due to be reported shortly. Canterbury Golf Course (95 years old) is carefully managing its ancient woodland – where does the Council think the three holes they are going to destroy be resited.

This area has numerous Rights of Way and Bridle paths which are well used by the general public. There is little indication as to how these paths will be able to cross the proposed new road. There is much emphasis on walking within the aims of the Plan but it would appear that walkers will have to negotiate the various road junctions in order to follow these routes since footpaths are not always continuous straight across the road but 100-200m down the road. Walkers and Riders should be able to cross safely and not run the gauntlet of heavy traffic– The Council could take the opportunity to make the footpaths more connected so that they don’t have to walk along the roads to find the opposite path. There is no information in the Local Plan as to how they propose to sort this.

I believe that this Plan has not been thought through; I find it unsustainable, unjustified and undeliverable. I suggest building a more realistic number of homes, of the size and type which are really needed by local residents together with the infrastructure to support them Doctors, hospitals, jobs etc., then the money saved by not building the EMC could be more usefully spent by the Council in innovating the approach to public transport, improving and extending bus services. This in turn could encourage less reliance on vehicles thus serving the twin aims of reducing car usage and therefore emissions/pollution and obviating the need to build new roads which encourage more use of vehicles. Try new things on the ring road now to help alleviate congestion e.g. traffic lights on the cinema, Police Station and Wincheap roundabouts, stop creating bottle necks, revisit traffic light settings etc.

Graham Vaughan